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SUBJECT: OMAN MEDIA REPORTING ON SECRETARY'S EGYPT VISIT
POSITIVE

¶1. Omani print media outlets generally carried positive, direct news reports on the Secretary's July 31 meetings with Arab ministers in Sharm el-Sheikh. English-language dailies the "Times of Oman" and the "Oman Daily Observer" ran upbeat, front-page headlines on August 2 highlighting the Secretary's proclamation that Israel and the Arab states should "seize opportunities" for peace in the run-up to a planned Middle East peace conference in the U.S. later this year. In addition, both papers focused on the importance of Saudi Arabia in shepherding the Arab states in advance of the planned conference. Arabic press used Reuters reporting, with state-owned daily "Oman" proclaiming, "U.S. Talks in the Region Bear Fruit."

¶2. An August 3 editorial by Arabic-language daily "al-Watan," however, took a more critical stance toward the visit to the region by the Secretary. Above the publication's political cartoon critically depicting the amount of aid given to Israel by the United States, the editorial questioned the intentions of the Secretary and asked why the overtures were not coming directly from the Israeli government instead. Reaffirming the importance of accepting the Arab peace initiative as the foundation for peace, the editorial called on Arab states to resist U.S. pressure to accept an agreement that "infringes on their rights."
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